

مكتبة الأصل

Waldheim to seek release of Western hostages

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — President Kurt Waldheim will seek the release of Western hostages held in Lebanon during his forthcoming state visit to Iran, the first by a Western head of state since the 1979 revolution, a newspaper reported Saturday. Waldheim went to Tehran in 1980 as U.N. secretary-general to try to win the release of 52 hostages held inside the U.S. embassy there. Waldheim then faced open hostility and narrowly escaped a physical attack, but he can expect a much friendlier reception this time by the Iranian leadership. According to the independent daily Der Standard, Foreign Minister Alois Mock confirmed reports that Waldheim would use his "prestige" for the benefit of the hostages. After visiting Tehran, Waldheim pays a two-day working visit to Syria for talks with President Hafez Assad, Austrian media reported. Officials said that in Tehran Waldheim was scheduled to confer with Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

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Gnehm warns Kuwaitis on human rights

KUWAIT (R) — U.S. Ambassador Edward Gnehm told Kuwaitis on Saturday that the world was watching their handling of human rights. "Kuwait must champion justice and fairness for all people in Kuwait in the same way the entire world stood for those principles for Kuwaitis," he told chamber of commerce and industry. "The world that supported your liberation now anxiously observes how you approach and handle this very important task of supporting the basic tenets of human rights. 'You must not become a victim now of the poison (Iraqi President Saddam Hussein) brought to Kuwait,' he said. "You must not let hatred and prejudice replace the traditional values of the Kuwaiti people. The innocent should not become the new victims..."

King Fahd to visit Kuwait Sunday

KUWAIT (R) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd will pay an official visit to Kuwait on Sunday, his first since U.S.-led forces drove Iraqi troops out of the emirate in February, an official announcement said. The Kuwaiti news agency KUNA said the Kuwaiti cabinet welcomed the visit and expressed appreciation for Saudi Arabia's "historic and positive stand which... helped rid Kuwait from the paws of Iraqi oppressive occupation." Saudi Arabia gave sanctuary to Kuwait's rulers and thousands of their citizens who fled Iraq's invasion last August 2. It also fought alongside allied forces in the Gulf war.

N. Korea denies it sold Scuds to Syria

TOKYO (AP) — North Korea on Saturday hotly denied a report that it had supplied Scud missiles to Syria. A report by the British military magazine Jane's Intelligence Review that North Korea had delivered 24 Scuds to Syria early this year was "a deliberate fabrication and dastardly false propaganda," the official Korean Central News Agency said. The Jane's report charged that North Korea would sell long-range missiles to any country that could pay and that its eagerness to become a Third World arms supplier threatened initiatives to curb the spread of weapons in the Middle East. The North Korean commentary, monitored in Tokyo, accused the United States of supplying weapons to Middle Eastern countries and of spreading propaganda intended to "force nuclear inspection upon us."

Artillery battles in South Lebanon

SIDON, Lebanon (AP) — Israeli-backed militiamen and leftist Muslim factions battled with mortars and multi-barreled rocket launchers in hills east of Sidon Saturday. Police said five Christian civilians were wounded. A police spokesman said among the injured were two brothers and their sister, aged between 2 and 9. The others were a 25-year-old woman and a 55-year-old man. All of them were wounded when a rocket hit a house in the Christian village of Sharay near the Christian town of Jezzine, 10 miles east of Sidon, provincial capital of South Lebanon, the spokesman said.

Maghreb summit postponed

BENGHAZI, Libya (R) — North African leaders postponed meeting in Libya Saturday, apparently because of political upheaval in Algeria. The two-day summit was scheduled to start Saturday but no foreign leaders arrived. Officials of the Libyan information ministry said without explanation that the meeting had been put off indefinitely. Postponement had been widely expected after Muslim fundamentalists rioted, derailed Algeria's first multi-party general election and forced President Chadli Benjedid to sack his government.



ROYAL VISIT — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday attended a military exercise carried out by one of the formations of the Third Royal Armoured Division. King Hussein was received upon arrival at the exercises site by Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fathi Abu Taleb, the chief of staff assistants, the commander of the Royal Air Force and the Army's inspector general. King Hussein was briefed at the outset of the exercise on its procedures and stages. The exercise, with live ammunition, included field operations and shooting at selected targets with the support of Air Force fighters and helicopter gunships. At the end of the exercise, the King inspected units taking part in the exercise and thanked them for their efforts and skills in carrying out their duties. The exercise was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Abdallah Ben Al Hussein, the King's military advisor. His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, and senior army officers.

Prince Hassan: Arabs, Palestinians race against time, for space

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Saturday emphasised the need to protect the rights of the Palestinian people under occupation who are confronting massive Jewish immigration.

Addressing the participants at the German-Arab dialogue, which was organised here by the Arab Thought Forum (ATF), Prince Hassan said the focal point was that of the human dimension, of the realities of what was happening in the occupied Arab territories.

"Today, it is sad to see that in this race against time we are also living in a race against space, that is physical living space, particularly in the occupied territories," the Prince said. He added: "I believe that 300 dunums of land

are being acquired daily and it is proven that 65 per cent of the land of Palestine and its resources are under the direct control of the occupation authorities."

Prince Hassan also said: "In the future, when you speak of stabilising Eastern Europe, you speak trans-nationally, and it is this element of trans-nationality that is so badly missing in this part of the world. And here I do not only speak as an Arab, but I speak in terms of the global West Asian region. Conflicting signals you might say, but certainly a war weariness in this region; despair both in terms of the politics of the international perception of the Middle East region, and certainly a growing despair in terms of the economics of the present and the

immediate past and immediate future of the Palestinian people who after all are the focal point in terms of the human dimension."

Referring to countries financing the Israeli settlement programme, the Prince said that this financing process will finally lead to the point where it would be very difficult indeed to speak effectively of recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians in determining their own future on their own soil, because that future would have been conditioned by the basic change.

"For this reason and for our own conviction, there is need for peace in this region which will be an alternative to military confrontation," the Prince noted.

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Khartoum approves aid flights for Sudanese abandoning Ethiopia

NAIROBI (R) — The Sudanese government, in an apparent shift in policy, has approved some food aid flights to about 400,000 Sudanese refugees who have fled back into their country from Ethiopia, the United Nations said Saturday.

The U.N. Lifeline Sudan Relief programme, in a statement in Nairobi, said Khartoum had approved daily U.N. relief flights from Kenya to Nasir, a swampy area in southern Sudan which is controlled by anti-government rebels.

But Louis Imbleau, a spokesman for the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said the ruling applied only to supplies taken in by a small U.N. twin Otter plane.

This can ferry only one tonne of relief supplies at time into Nasir's small and waterlogged airstrip, he said.

Authorisation for WFP and other relief agencies to drop food to the refugees from larger transport planes flying low was still

pending, he added.

Relief officials in Nairobi welcomed Khartoum's decision as a shift in attitude.

The Nasir area is controlled by the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Khartoum government has looked on the refugees as SPLA sympathisers.

The Sudanese refugees, originally fleeing attacks on their camps in Ethiopia by Oromo Liberation Front guerrillas, were bombed by Sudanese air force planes when they crossed back into their country.

According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) there were originally 400,000 Sudanese refugees in the Ethiopian Camps. All of them are believed to be trying to resettle themselves in Sudan.

Imbleau said that by Saturday morning 50,000 refugees had streamed into Nasir, a Huddle of crumbling brick houses on the bank of the silted river, where the

United Nations has set up a relief post.

Tens of thousands more were on their way there from the massive Itang refugee camp near the Ethiopian town of Gambela and Nasir's refugee population was expected to double to 100,000 by Monday, he added.

Many thousands of others were believed to be heading for other SPLA-held towns near the Ethiopian border such as Akobo, Pochalla and Boma, Imbleau said.

Imbleau said the small U.N. relief team in Nasir had moved its camp into the town centre to try to deter Sudan's military government from further bombing raids.

"It is well marked and that is going to stop the bombing, hopefully," he said.

But Imbleau said there was a desperate shortage of food, shelter and medicine for the refugees at Nasir, most of whom have trekked on foot through a swamp for a week to get there.

U.N. officials were having difficulty maintaining order in the vast camp which was suddenly springing up there, he added.

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) said it would probably become the first relief organisation to start dropping food from the air to the refugees at Nasir next week.

LWF officials said a C-130 Hercules will be switched from airlifting food to the besieged government-held town of Juba to ferrying supplies to Nasir.

LWF would charter a Boeing 707 to maintain the airfield into Juba, where nearly a quarter of million people displaced by the eight-year-old civil war in southern Sudan are on the brink of starvation, they added.

Several dozen Sudanese refugees are reported to have been killed in Ethiopia. The United Nations said in its statement that Ethiopian militiamen were continuing to rob and harass the refugees on the Sudanese side of the border.

Israel holds key to release of W. Hostages'

BAALBEK, Lebanon (R) — A leader of the Muslim fundamentalist group Hezbollah said Saturday the Western hostages in Lebanon would not be released until Israel freed Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners.

Hussein Musawi, a member of the ruling council of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah (Party of God), said Tehran wanted the hostage problem resolved but did not want to put pressure on the kidnappers in Lebanon unless Israel released its prisoners.

"Without solving the issue of the prisoners in Israel there is no solution to the hostage issue," Musawi said when asked to comment on a statement by an Iranian official last week that he expected the Western hostages in Lebanon to be freed soon.

Groups linked to Hezbollah are believed to hold the 12 Westerners — six Americans, three Britons, two Germans and an Italian. American journalist Terry Anderson, abducted six years ago, is the longest held.

Musawi spoke to reporters one day before British Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg arrives in Beirut for talks with officials in a bid to speed up the release of Western hostages.

"I am 100 per cent sure our brothers in Iran want to end the hostage issue... definitely and once and for all," Musawi said.

"But at the same time they don't want to pressure the Islamic groups which are concerned with the hostages to release their captives while the Palestinian and Lebanese hostages and prisoners are still held by the Israeli enemy and its agents."

Christians say they sought to save a Lebanon they had dominated since independence from France in 1943. Muslims claim they fought for equal rights with the Christians and to build a Lebanon in which privilege was shared among all.

Now, the disgruntled gunslings complain, they're being tossed aside with no recognition of the sacrifices they believe they made.

"Our men have paid dearly for Lebanon. They should be provided with a future," said George Abdul Masih, spokesman for the Lebanese Forces. With 6,000 hardcore fighters, it was the main militia of right-wing Maronite Catholics, the dominant Christian sect.

In the meantime, the unemployed militiamen are mostly cooped up in their barracks, whiling away the time playing cards or soccer. Few expressed any desire for joining the army.

"What ideology shall I defend in the army?" one Druse asked.

"Why should I take orders from Hrawi's government?"

A former Lebanese Forces

militiaman said he will maintain his party's ideals of Maronite ascendancy even if he joins the army.

"I'll go on defending our existence as Christians in this region," the young man said.

Although the government wants to expand the 40,000-strong army to 60,000 men, senior officers are loath to take in militiamen whose loyalty was more to their warlords and their sects than to legitimate authority.

"These fighters shall believe in the ideologies instilled into them by their parties and these are not necessarily compatible with the national interest," a government official commented.

Many militiamen were notorious for their lack of discipline and their penchant for looting and rapine, taking what they wanted when they wanted.

Israel and an allied Lebanese militia hold hundreds of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners whose release is the main demand of the Pro-Iranian kidnappers of the dozen Westerners.

Musawi said it was clear that Syria, an ally of Iran and the main power broker in Lebanon.

He added that he believed the Westerners would be helped by solving the mystery of four Iranians missing since they were kidnapped by a Christian militia north of Beirut in 1982.

"We ask those who campaign under the slogan of human rights (the West) why they differentiate between one human being and another? We declare that this differentiation is the main reason behind all this crisis."

The heavily fortified line ex-

1st inspection of Iraq's chemical weapons set for this weekend

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. inspectors will arrive in Baghdad this weekend to begin surveying Iraq's chemical weapons arsenal of more than 10,000 bombs, shells and missile warheads, the United Nations said Friday.

At least 24 chemical weapons experts from Australia, Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden are to fly from Bahrain to Baghdad Sunday, U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

The team will spend a week surveying the Muthanna state establishment, which it calls "Samarra site," about 70 kilometres west of Baghdad.

Iraq says the site has almost 10,000 chemical weapons, the bulk of its chemical arsenal that survived the allied bombing raids in January and February.

The Iraqi authorities told the United Nations they have both completed weapons and bulk supplies of the nerve gases sarin and tabun there, as well as mustard gas.

In addition, Baghdad said there are 2,500 sarin warheads for Saqr-30 missiles and 200 sarin aerial bombs under the debris of a destroyed storehouse at the site.

Iraq agreed to the destruction of its chemical, biological, and nuclear warfare capability, and the disposal of its ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometres, under the Security Council's April 3 ceasefire resolution.

The inspectors will also be looking for evidence of biological

weapons or production facilities for them. Iraq said it did have germ warfare capability, although the U.S. State Department insisted that it did.

The State Department has also said it believed Iraq has not revealed all the chemical weapons stockpiles that remain. U.N. officials said there is no way to prove Iraq has revealed all its chemical armaments.

Gallucci said the investigators will also study the weapons to learn the best ways of disposing of them.

The United States, Canada, Germany and Soviet Union have methods for destroying chemical weapons they have designed — this is the first case of the attempted disposal of chemical weapons that are unfamiliar.

The U.N. commission is setting up a headquarters and research laboratory in Bahrain, where its experts can be briefed on the hazards and practice of disposing of the weapons.

A team of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors has already checked the "ranks" of Iraq's two nuclear research sites.

The Security Council Friday privately discussed a proposal to have Iraq pay for the destruction of its chemical and biological weapons and Scud-type missiles. Diplomats said the plan would be adopted in a resolution next week.

also admitted that it still has 52 Scud missiles with 30 chemical warheads that survived the allied bombing.

Bob Gallucci, deputy executive chairman of the U.N. commission destroying the Iraqi weapons, said the survey team would make sure the weapons aren't leaking, particularly those under ruined storehouses.

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Mitsotakis visits green line, denounces division of Cyprus

NICOSIA. Cyprus (AP) — Greek Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis visited the so-called green line splitting war-divided Cyprus Saturday and denounced the division as an "unacceptable shame."

Mitsotakis, on the second day of a three-day visit, told his hosts that "it is your policy and ours to see this dividing line wiped out so that the whole of Cyprus and Nicosia can be reunited."

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Hundreds of Greek Cypriots lined Ledra Street, the main shopping avenue in the old walled city, cheering Mitsotakis as he walked to the green line. Many brushed security guards aside to hug or shake hands with him.

Earlier in the day, he was presented with the golden key of

the city and proclaimed an honorary citizen by Demetrides.

Mitsotakis said Greece wholeheartedly supports the struggle of Cyprus to end the Turkish occupation and reunite the island.

He said that the primary reason of his visit is to exchange views with Vassilios and other Greek Cypriot leaders grouped in the Cyprus National Council on adopting a joint policy for "achieving what we have a right to demand from everyone."

Cyprus has been unofficially partitioned since the 1974 Turkish invasion launched in the wake of an Athens-backed coup by Greek Cypriot supporters of union with Greece.

Fleeing Ethiopian officials arrested

ADDIS ABABA (R) — More than 1,000 former Ethiopian officials have been arrested while fleeing towards Kenya and Somalia, the official Ethiopian News Agency (ENA) reported Saturday.

ENA said the heavily-armed officials were detained while travelling in a convoy of about 150 stolen government vehicles through the southern Bale region.

Nearly all of those arrested were members of deposed President Mengistu Haile Mariam's

Marxist Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE), it added.

The northern-based Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which overthrew Mengistu and captured the capital Addis Ababa last week, has ordered all WPE offices to close.

Meanwhile, EPRDF radio said there had been a demonstration in the northern city of Gondar to demand the extradition of Mengistu from Zimbabwe, where he fled May 21.

Republic of Somaliland swears in government

NAIROBI (R) — The breakaway Republic of Somaliland proclaimed by rebels in northern Somalia, has sworn in a government and imposed Islamic sharia law.

Radio Hargeisa said rebel leader Abd Al Rahman Ahmad Ali was sworn in as president Friday in a ceremony at the town of Burco.

The broadcast, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), said several ministers of his government were also sworn in at the same time.

The northern-based Somali National Movement (SNM) declared the former British colony of Somaliland an independent republic on May 18 following the disintegration of Somalia into tribal fiefdoms with the overthrow of President Mohamed Siad Barre in January.

The SNM is the oldest and strongest of several rebel movements that emerged to challenge Siad Barre's strong-arm rule in the 1980s and draws its power from the large Issaq clan of northern Somalia.

Kuwait military in disarray with disgruntled officer corps

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — The Kuwaiti military is in disarray with many of the best officers incensed that senior commanders still hold their posts after the liberation of the emirate, soldiers and Western diplomats say.

The angry officers have circu-

lated two petitions saying they will quit if post-Gulf war restructuring does not include leadership changes.

"We are not talking about one, two or three officers. We're talking about hundreds. They can't rebuild without us," said an offic-

er who signed one of the state-

ments.

The tension could affect U.S. policy in the region. The Ameri-

cans are holding at least the rank of colonel, requested that their names, ranks and service branch not be used due to the sensitivity of the subject.

With hundreds of thousands of Iraqis massed on the border, the officers said they sensed the military was not ready when they were finally put on alert at 10 p.m. last Aug. 1, but did not realise the scope of the problem until the invasion began four hours later.

"There was no intelligence to tell them (headquarters) what was happening on the ground," said one officer. "They had no plan to fall back on. If you called them to ask them what to do they would say, 'you're a commander, you decide.'"

The basic demand of the disgruntled officers is to redress the military fiasco of Aug. 2, when Kuwait's 20,300-man armed forces put only a brief, uncoordinated defence to the Iraqi invasion.

They are demanding an investigation, and removal if necessary, of the chief of staff, his senior staff and their aides — up to 20 generals and 75 colonels.

The officers conceded Kuwait's tiny military could not have stopped the invasion. But they said maybe it could have held long enough for world reaction to make Baghdad hesitate about

trying to absorb the whole country.

"If we had been ready, we could have done some damage to the Iraqis," said a second officer.

Officers said the Kuwaiti headquarters quickly lost contact with many units and issued conflicting orders every few hours to those who could reach, until the last order came late Aug. 2 — to flee.

"Sometimes a man has to stay and fight. When you wear a uniform part of your job is to fight and die. You accept that. You do not want to receive an order that says, 'drop your weapons and run, the country has collapsed,'" the second officer said.

The feeling runs especially strong among the nearly 700 officers imprisoned in Iraq during the conflict, and the 30 or so who went underground and helped pass intelligence to the allied command.

"It has to be investigated," said another officer. "Who was responsible? Why did they not give us orders to fight? Why didn't they reorganise in Saudi Arabia?"

The officers seemed to have an open mind toward their demands. And they stressed they were not interested in a coup.

"We don't believe in the banana-republic route," said one.

The air force was first to urge an inquest, with 10 top officers delivering a letter April 23 to the new defence minister saying they would leave the military if no action was taken within three months.

No names were mentioned in the letter, but it clearly referred to removing the chief of staff, Maj.-Gen. Mirzani, and his deputy, Maj. Gen. Jabbar Al Khaledi.

The second petition to be submitted soon, and mainly organised by army officers, is an extremely polite letter to Kuwait's ruler, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sab

مكتبة من الأصل

Home News

New border crossing planned near Ramtha

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Public Works and Housing Saturday announced plans for the construction of a new border post near the Jordanian-Syrian border to serve as a substitute for the present premises, located at Ramtha, and said that the project would take 1,000 days to be completed.

The ministry said in a statement that a tender had been awarded to a local construction firm which would set up the premises at Jaber village, near the common border, at the cost of JD 8 million.

The ministry said that the project, to be set up on a 2,500 dunum plot of land, entailed setting up several offices and a residential quarter as well as general service units. The total area of the buildings will be 33,374 dunums.

The project also entails laying the infrastructure, including the construction of roads, bridges and other utilities on 520,000 square metres, the ministry statement said.

The statement noted that work on the project, which could be expected to be completed by the middle of 1994, would start in the coming two months, according to the terms of the agreement.

It said that the new border post was to be built as the international highway, linking Amman to the Syrian border, through Mafraq and Zarqa, a stretch of 52.5 kilometres, has been completed. The four-lane highway, together with the new border post premises, it concluded, are bound to boost transit and general traffic across the Syrian-Jordanian border.

Jordan urges ILO to help settle returnees

GENEVA (J.T.) — Jordan told the International Labour Organisation (ILO) that it sustained damage to its economy, estimated at one third of the Kingdom's gross national product (GNP), as a result of the Gulf crisis, and called for urgent assistance from the organisation to help settle the Gulf expatriates.

Jordan's appeal was presented to the ILO general conference here by Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Dughmi who stressed that Jordan was the country worst affected by the Gulf crisis and is in dire need of assistance to cope with the consequences of the returnees.

Jordan calls on the ILO to help it set up a crisis fund to help the returnees who have lost their savings, property and livelihoods and aggravated the country's unemployment problem.

Mr. Dughmi, who heads the Jordanian delegation at this year's meetings, said that unemployment in Jordan was now estimated at 16.8 per cent of the total workforce and it was a direct cause for the wide spread poverty.

The minister noted that at least 33 per cent of the total population in Jordan now live under the poverty line, up from 20 per cent before the Gulf crisis.

The government last week announced plans to set up housing units, at the initial cost of JD 4 million, to help settle the returnees and said further plans were contemplated.

Mr. Dughmi told the meeting that the Jordanian government had engineered a fund to supply low-income groups with soft loans to embark on income-generating projects and become self supportive, and help reduce the unemployment problem in the country.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITION

- ★ Exhibition of photographs by Bernard Guillot at the French Cultural Centre — 6:00 p.m.
- ★ Comprehensive book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Iraqi artist Abdulla Jabbar Salama at Alfa Art Gallery, Insurance Building, 1st Circle (opening ceremony at 6 p.m.)

CONCERT

- ★ Music concert by Ludwig String Quartet at the Royal Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.

Italian parliamentarians stress need for implementation of 242, 338

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A seven-member Italian parliamentary team, currently on a tour of the region, headed for Jerusalem Saturday after holding talks with various Arab leaders regarding the international efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. The team's visit will also center around the latest American proposal which was rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The team, headed by Michele Achilli, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Italian senate and a member of the Italian Socialist Party, met with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

"We want to check (see) the position of the main countries, especially with the latest Bush proposal," Mr. Achilli told the Jordan Times.

The Bush proposal, presented in letters to Shamir and Assad, suggested a compromise in the position of the two countries concerning holding a conference on the Middle East, defining the role of the United Nations at such a conference, and the possibility of

holding the talks more than once.

Reports from Tel Aviv spoke of Shamir's rejection of the compromise proposal that suggests having a United Nations observer present at the conference which would reconvene every six months with the consent of the participating parties.

Mr. Achilli described Israel's refusal of the proposal as "ridiculous," saying that now was the right time to move in the direction of resolving the Arab-Israeli problem. He also said that Italy, along with the rest of the members of the European Community, supported the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

His Royal Highness also discussed with the Italian visitors the question of inter-regional cooperation for the utilisation of the region's natural resources, especially water.

Referring to Iraq, the Prince stressed the need to safeguard Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and voiced concern over the consequences of the Gulf war on the population.

The team also met with the speakers of the upper and lower houses of Parliament, Ahmad al Lawzi and Abdul Latif Arabyati, who referred to Israel's rejection of Security Council resolutions as a stumbling block in the way of achieving peace in the region.

"Italy is for the full implementation of (resolutions) 242 and 338, and for the security, self-determination and recognition of the Palestinians," he said.

Admitting that progress was slow regarding the implementation of the Security Council resolutions, Mr. Achilli said the Arab side was willing to move towards resolving the conflict, but that the other side (Israel) was not showing much flexibility.

"I felt that the Arab coun-

tries are in a good mood, and ready to understand the other side," he said.

During their two-day visit to Jordan the team met with Crown Prince Hassan and heard from the Jordanian views on the current situation regarding the latest peace proposal.

Prince Hassan also emphasised the need for a settlement that would ensure security and stability in the region in line with similar arrangements endorsed by the Helsinki conference on security and stability in Europe.

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Government pledges to help reduce number of unemployed

AMMAN (Petra) — The government is determined to implement numerous economic and investment projects that would open the way for the employment of a good number of graduates from the faculty of engineering and technology in Jordan and thus help reduce the unemployment problem, Prime Minister Mudar Badran announced here Saturday.

"The government has already made allocations to help achieve this goal through the Ministry of Public Works and Housing which would appoint new engineers for on-the-job training periods," the prime minister said following his opening of the second exhibition of architectural work by students

from the University of Jordan. Mr. Badran said that the Ministry of Public Works had already employed 400 new engineers for on-the-job training programmes.

The government, Mr. Badran noted, is also planning to absorb new graduates through a programme that would be implemented in coordination with the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) between now and the end of 1991, and the engineers will put to work on numerous economic projects.

Praising the high standard of training the students are acquiring at the University of Jordan, the prime minister said that the designs put on display were close

Baby milk available again

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Baby milk is back on pharmacy shelves where it was not available for a few weeks due to a stop in importing baby formula from Britain and Ireland after the spread of a cow disease that contaminated milk in those countries.

Now, an importer of children's formula said, some 100,000 cans of milk are waiting for clearance in the Aqaba Port, while another 70,000 cans have already been distributed to pharmacies over the past few days.

According to Abdel Rahim Issa, an importer of medicine and baby milk and a representative of the Technical Committee of the Jordanian Pharmacists Association, the clearance of the milk in Aqaba is expected to take ten days as compared with two days previously. This is because the formula has to be sampled tested at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) to ensure that it is free of the virus causing the cow disease in Ireland and Britain.

"It has not been proved that the virus affects human beings, but the virus has an incubation period of up to five years and because it has not been proved to definitely not affect them it is best to be on the safe side and test the milk," Mr. Issa said. Pharmacists are sure that the concerned parties are doing

their utmost to solve the milk "crisis" as efficiently as possible.

Some think there are other reasons behind the lack of baby milk now, when it was available throughout the Gulf war. "I don't think it is just because of the cow disease, but people unintentionally hoard large supplies of milk in their homes rendering the milk unavailable to others," a pharmacist in Shmeisani, who refused to identify himself, said.

"I also believe that the milk disappeared faster because many people bought children's milk to send it to Iraq where it is badly needed. This further depleted the available supply," he said.

The pharmacist said there was no reason to worry about the increase of the milk price because the Ministry of Health was keeping a close watch on the pricing process. He added that "the price of medicine, like the price of medicine, only changes if the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar changes."

Mr. Issa said that the prices of milk and medicine would change if the exchange money rate fluctuates by three per cent and for three months in a row.

French Quartet holds concert

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Each year the series of recitals and concerts in Amman used to start in October and last till June, the year after. However, because of the situation that had prevailed in the region, music has taken a long slumber since mid 1990. The coming of the famous French "Quatuor Ludwig," Jean-Philippe Audouin — 1st violin, Marc Togoni — 2nd violin, Padraig Faure — violin alto and Anne Coquery — cello, will be to Amman's music life what the prince charming was to the sleeping beauty.

The "Quatuor Ludwig" concert is introduced by the French Cultural Centre in Amman in cooperation with the National Music Conservatory, Noor Al Hussein Foundation. A unique concert is scheduled on Sunday, June 9, 1991, at 8:00 p.m. at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Four young but already mature

musicians created the quartet in September 1985. Since then, they have won numerous awards, toured the United States and Europe and made excellent recordings of quartets by French composers Claude Debussy and Henri Dutilleux. One of the major works by Dutilleux is particularly well performed by the Quatuor Ludwig: "Ainsi La Nuit."

The Quatuor experience has led them to working with Bruno Pasquier, the Quatuor Alan Berg, the Quatuor de Tokyo as well as many other influential modern musicians. An exceptional television recording was produced for their performance of Berg's "Suite Lyrique."

On a tour covering also Syria and Egypt, the Quatuor's Sunday's concert should be the first in a new series of music events supposed to restore the pleasure of live performance in the hearts and soul of all music lovers in Jordan.



Foreign Minister Taber Al Masri Saturday holds talks with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas on ways to assist Palestinians under occupation (Petra photo)

Jordan, PLO discuss W. Bank support

AMMAN (R) — Jordan's foreign minister and a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official Saturday discussed ways of supporting Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied territories.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said Foreign Minister Taher Al Masri and Mahmoud Abbas, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee, led a meeting of a Jordanian-Palestinian committee to support Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"They discussed ways of supporting the Palestinians and alleviating their sufferings that have resulted from the tough economic, educational and social conditions they are facing," Petra said.

"They also discussed financing necessary programmes," the agency added.

The joint committee, formed in 1985 to help social and economic development in the West Bank, has dramatically reduced its activities due to lack of funds from Gulf states.

Seminar tackles vocational training programmes

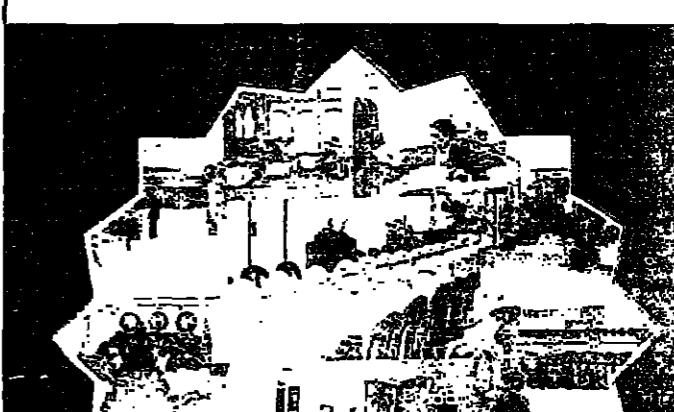
AMMAN (Petra) — Officials in charge of vocational training programmes in Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Egypt, Syria and Jordan gathered in Amman Saturday for a two-week training seminar organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) Director Ahmad Atwan said that the participants would discuss training courses, preparation of programmes and cooperation with United Nations agencies in this field.

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Cyprus invites tourists

AMMAN — The director-general of Cyprus Tourism, Mrs. Phryne Michael, answering a question posed by a leading Arab journalist said in detail: "I would like to assure our friends in the Arab World that our tourism is not merely numbers. Our ambition is to offer to every tourist who comes to Cyprus all facilities so that he can enjoy his holidays to the maximum possible degree and thus leave our island a happier and more relaxed human being."

Today Cyprus is still a special place. Despite its small size it offers a unique variety of scenery, from golden sandy beaches to green pine-clad forests rich in rare species of plants which altitudes of more than 6,000 feet.

I must underline the most dominant and important attraction of Cyprus as a holiday destination. Our people and Cyprus hospitality which is unparalleled and cannot be easily matched by any other country. Cyprus has been called the "Island of Love and Beauty" and is very much so.

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Jordan Times

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New era for Jordan

TODAY marks a historic occasion for Jordan when the much-acclaimed and much-talked-about National Charter will be adopted at a conference grouping representatives of all walks of life in the Kingdom. Ever since His Majesty King Hussein formally introduced the proposal to articulate and adopt a national charter to regulate the country's political, social and economic life on April 21, 1990 and established the Royal Commission for that purpose, the people of Jordan have been engaged in deep dialogue and widespread discussions across the entire political spectrum. To this very last day, there remains some confusion about the nature, legal status and overall purpose of the Charter. The Charter itself defines its raison d'être as intended to lay "the foundation for the general national effort and guide its route." The King was more specific when launching the mandate of the Royal Commission by said that the Commission's "role will be to draft a national charter which will constitute the starting point upon which people from all walks of life will meet before they are launched into the practice of political pluralism." The other studies of opinion in the country on the Charter ranged from depicting the entire exercise as an effort to provide a ceiling for political activity in the Kingdom to "a general ideological framework, proposing new basic concepts and advanced ideas that govern the course of the Jordanian state within the contemporary perspective," as the former prime minister and chairman of the Commission, Mr. Ahmad Obaidat, said in one of the meetings of the Commission.

On balance, the most reasonable way to define the Charter is to describe it as some kind of domestic "customary law" incorporating a sort of social contract among the people of Jordan and among their various political, socio-economic affiliations. For all intents and purposes, the document does not purport to address all the issues or redress all the shortcomings that exist or may surface in the future. There is no doubt, therefore, that such a charter will require periodic review to make sure that its contents remain dynamic in the face of all changes that may occur in the democratic experiment in the country. If, as suggested by the Chairman of the Royal Commission, Mr. Ahmad Obaidat, the country's very Constitution needs to be amended in order to reflect more faithfully the conclusions reached by the Commission, surely the Charter itself has to incorporate some agreement for a periodic national consult at the end of at least every decade. "Remember," Mr. Obaidat remarked in one of the Commission's meetings, "the Constitution was written forty years ago and in those forty years many new images and realities took place which would contribute to the development of our awareness." So as long as the conferees in today's meeting and the watching people of Jordan keep in mind that the Charter is not the end of the road, but rather the beginning, they will be better advised to concentrate on the spirit and comprehensive purpose of the Charter rather than on its bits and parts in isolation from the whole.

If there were some basic elements missing in the Charter it is the absence of any effort to address some of the country's archaic tradition, especially tribal justice and honour crimes. As the new "customary law" of the land is to introduce contemporary mores and practices not confined to political activity, it is unfortunate that this first endeavour ever to put the socio-economic and political paths of the country on the right course has failed to raise such pestered issues that still afflict the Jordanian society.

And as the entire Charter provisions were expressly made subject to the various international treaties that Jordan had ratified, it is pertinent to remember, therefore, that the Charter needs to be read and construed in the light of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) which Jordan signed and ratified some 14 years ago.

The other consideration in this entire exercise is the fact that the Charter has no force of law and was never intended to be so. The fact that it may be subjected to a closer scrutiny in the future in some kind of review conference makes the task of accepting it that much less controversial.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT seems that President Bush's efforts to open the way for the return to the Middle East by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker have been aborted thanks to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Saturday. The paper noted that Shamir's rejection of the U.S. president's ideas came in a reply message sent to the American leader in the past week refusing the idea of an enlarged peace conference to be held every six months and the symbolic presence of the U.N. secretary general at the meeting. With this new rejection Israel has thus added one more "no" to peace with the Arabs on the basis of exchanging land for peace, the paper noted. It said Israel has also refused to freeze its Jewish settlement programme in occupied Arab lands, and rejected the idea of involving Palestinians living in Jerusalem in the peace process, considering Jerusalem as the indisputable capital of Israel. The new rejection of Bush's ideas places the U.S. administration face to face with a new defiance and a difficult test at a time when the U.S. administration has shown no sign of serious attempts to put an end to Israel's intransigence, the paper pointed out. Unless the Americans take a meaningful step and unless the Arabs concert their stands, the Arab Nation will sooner or later discover that all promises of a peaceful settlement for their chronic problem with Israel is no more than a mirage.

A guest columnist in Sawt Al Shabab Arabic daily Saturday says that the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan has the right to express its members' political and ideological views but should equally tolerate other people's rights to express their views on equal basis. Muslim Brotherhood members are free to express their views and ideas but they have no right to consider such ideas as enshrined with sanctity says Abu Karim Kabariti. He notes that the Brotherhood have the right to appear as pious and religious as they wish but should not characterise themselves as the protectors of Islam or serving under the standards of the innocent and the pure. Kabariti, a parliament member and former minister, invites the Muslim Brotherhood to delve into politics within the framework of the Constitution, and not to consider themselves to be the only Muslims on earth. He says each member of the Jordanian family has the right to have his or her say and everyone is liable to mistakes including members and non-members of the Muslim Brotherhood. If you strive to build palaces in paradise, that is your own personal affairs, but you have to realise that Jordanian citizens cannot do without material homes on earth and jobs to earn a living; and this cannot materialise by day-dreaming alone or through building castles in the air, the writer says addressing the Brotherhood. We cannot bury our heads in the sand and try to forget about the prevailing situation, but we ought to face the stark truth that the Jordanian people cannot sit idly by and cannot be neutralised while watching Muslim Brotherhood members issuing Islamic legal views (Fatwas) in Cairo or Germany to be imposed on Jordanians, the writer adds. He notes that Jordanians believe in democracy, supremacy of the law and national unity, and realise also that the coming stage can by no means tolerate any side issues in the struggle for existence and national unity and the future of the Arab Nation. The writer says the Jordanians can by no means succumb to the will of those issuing directives from Cairo where the Israeli flag continues to fly, and stresses the fact that the Jordanian people can by no means detract from their national stand.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Debt relief, the only option

IT has become abundantly clear by now that Jordan is unable to service its huge external debts, both principal and interest. This problem calls for a radical solution. The solution should be sought between Jordan and its creditors, through the proper reading of the situation and recognition of the hard facts. The sooner the better.

In the year 1990, for example, some \$935 million in principal and \$599 million in interest fell due and became payable. This, a total of \$1534 million, is equivalent to 150 per cent of the value of all commodity exports, or 45.4 per cent of the gross domestic product at factory cost, as calculated by the IMF experts.

These horrible ratios give an idea on the volume and the burden of debt service in relative terms, but it is practically useless, because it does not mean that Jordan would have been able to service the debt if only the ratios were a little bit lower and reasonable. Even if principal amounts were deferred for a grace period of ten years, as was agreed in the case of Morocco, the Jordanian economy will not be able to generate foreign exchange sufficient to pay the interest or any part of it, unless payment is financed by fresh loans.

Let us then look at, study and analyse the balance of payments for the year 1990, when Jordan was applying the economic adjustment programme approved by the IMF, to the full satisfaction of the official creditors of Paris Club, and the private creditors of London Club.

Around \$663 million were re-scheduled, representing overdue principal and interest. Another amount of \$324 million came due but was not paid during the Gulf crisis. Total amounts not paid was thus in the order of \$989 million. By subtracting this unpaid amount from the total amounts that came due, which is \$1.534 million as explained above, we conclude that Jordan actually paid \$545 million during 1990 in debt service.

However, another look at the balance of payments will reveal that Jordan obtained fresh credit of \$545 million during the year, which is exactly equal to the amounts paid. In other words, the net repayment was zero, and the overall indebtedness grew by around \$600 million, due to accumulation of interest on the staggering \$8 billion outstanding debt.

But 1990 was an exceptionally good year, as far as the flow of foreign exchange is concerned. Jordan received during the first

half of the year generous Arab aid, and received during the second half large amounts of foreign aid by way of compensation for Gulf crisis losses. Only under those favourable circumstances was Jordan able to make ends meet without net borrowing.

In other words, it is not expected that Jordan can in the future maintain a similar balance between new borrowing and repayment of old debts. Most likely Jordan will need more credit to cover the gap in its current account, which is getting narrower slowly and with difficulty. Creditors will not be able to squeeze sizeable amounts of foreign exchange from Jordan when unemployment is in the twenties and the standard of living is 40 per cent below the level reached in 1987.

Barring a miracle, there is obviously no realistic solution to the external debt of Jordan except a mutual agreement to write off the whole debt, provided Jordan will undertake to the international community that it will vigorously reform and liberalise its economy, and will accelerate its drive for democracy, human rights, clean environment and political commitment to peace with justice.

expression, is every bit as urgent in the wake of the Gulf war as repairing the material and environmental devastation. Only under the free-flowering of the Muslim intellect can we jettison the rigid polemics and intolerance of thought and develop credibility with the rest of the world community.

These commands enjoin good and forbid evil, and call for the improvement of our socio-economic condition. They enjoin us to defend the rights of the poor and oppressed, refrain from economic exploitation and strive for a socially just society.

On the global scene, Muslims must develop the confidence to become actors rather than passive spectators. To begin, we should accept the reality of a pluralistic world. Within Muslim history, pluralism is far from an alien concept. Any doctrinaire rigidity that runs counter to Islamic principles of accommodating others should be rejected. We must then muster the political will and commitment to change, which can only happen in an atmosphere of free expression.

Intellectual reconstruction, which can only be based on free

expression, is every bit as urgent in the wake of the Gulf war as repairing the material and environmental devastation. Only under the free-flowering of the Muslim intellect can we jettison the rigid polemics and intolerance of thought and develop credibility with the rest of the world community.

Beyond this immediate task of intellectual reconstruction, the Muslim world must establish new priorities. We must develop the potential to construct and maintain an economic infrastructure which is self-reliant as well as globally competitive. Only on that basis can we begin to improve the living conditions of our people and provide them with the basic amenities of life.

Then we can realistically aspire to fulfil the moral imperatives of Islam — the promotion of universal education, prudent management of resources, respect for basic human rights and fair distribution of wealth.

If we do not take these imperatives as the new agenda of all Muslims, our existence will remain one of dependence and despair.

ce of Egypt and Syria.

The project has run into difficulties over the military role of the Syrians and disputes over the amount of the Kuwait reconstruction business to be awarded to Egypt. Iran, left out, opposed it from the start.

For the Gulf Arabs, Iran's great size and strength are the main reason for caution if they are to look to Tehran. One diplomat compared an alliance with Iran to "inviting the bear into your cave to protect yourself against the bear."

Aside from age-old antipathy between Arabs and Persians, the Gulf states still look with concern at Iran's 12-year-old Islamic Revolution, which is closely associated in their minds with the Shi'ite Muslim creed professed by most Iranians.

Most Gulf states have Shi'ite minorities, some of which are sympathetic to Tehran, and are highly sensitive to any threat to their Sunni Muslim and broadly pro-western monarchies.

Talk of worldwide Islamic revolution on the Iranian model can still be heard from some hardline deputies in Iran's parliament despite the best efforts of Rafsanjani and his team to assure their neighbours that Iran has no expansive plans.

The hardliners look askance at better relations with the Gulf's feudal rulers, whom they view with contempt. But, for Rafsanjani, the move is a key part of his strategy to end Iran's diplomatic isolation and revive its shattered economy.

Most diplomats agree that a key test of the budding relationship between Iran and the GCC will be what happens on this month's haj pilgrimage to Mecca, which Iranians are taking part in for the first time since 1987.

Iran has boycotted the haj since 400 mostly Iranian demonstrators were killed that year in clashes with Saudi police in Mecca. The incident led to the break in ties between Tehran and Riyadh.

The two countries have agreed that 110,000 Iranian pilgrims will go to Mecca this month and may demonstrate under certain conditions. Diplomats say Iran is bending over backwards to assure Saudi Arabia there will be no trouble this time.

Iran bids for bigger role in Gulf politics

By Patrick Worsnip
Reuter

TEHRAN — Iran, isolated for a more than decade from its Gulf Arab neighbours by their fear of its Islamic fundamentalism, is capitalising on the Arab split caused by the Gulf war.

President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani trod a difficult path of neutrality after Iran's former ally Iraq invaded Kuwait last August.

There was no question of supporting Iraq but neither could Tehran welcome the U.S.-led allied build-up in Saudi Arabia.

Now, with Iraq defeated and American troops heading home, Iran can look across the Gulf with some satisfaction.

The Gulf Arabs, most of whom backed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein during its 1980-88 war against Iran, are drawing a bitter lesson: Baghdad proved a treacherous ally and they have little choice but to make up with Tehran.

It goes against the grain because the Iranians are not Arabs and speak a language unrelated to Arabic. But Iran and Iraq are the two strongest powers in the area, and with Iraq in eclipse for the moment, Iran has inevitably come to the fore again.

"The Iranians are very keen to break the all-against-one, Arabs-against-Persians mentality that was the strength of Saddam. They want to prevent that happening again," one western diplomat said.

Already there is talk of increasing cooperation between Iran and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which groups all the states of the Arabian peninsula except Yemen.

The matter was discussed during an important visit to Tehran this week by Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal, whose country only restored relations with Iran three months ago after a four-year break.

Iranian media quoted the Saudi minister as saying the GCC wanted better relations with Iran and would soon issue a statement on the subject.

What the new relationship will involve is still unclear. Washington, to whom the Gulf states are beholden for driving Iraqi forces from Kuwait, is unlikely to welcome any serious military ties



between them and Iran. Nevertheless Iran argues that, as a country of 57 million people with the longest Gulf coastline of any state, it cannot be excluded from regional cooperation agreements.

Its arguments have been strengthened by the problems surrounding a plan launched in Damascus in March to defend the Gulf with a new grouping combining the financial power of the GCC states with the military mus-

Post-Gandhi campaigning nudges India towards coalition

By Ruth Pitchford
Reuter

NEW DELHI — It is no longer an ordinary Indian election campaign. No virulent denunciations, no rally grounds teeming with slogan-chanting supporters, no passionate groundswell of support for a charismatic leader.

After the killing of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, many voters longing to end political and economic instability will merely elect another hung parliament to replace the fractious house that made and broke two minority governments after inconclusive 1989 polls.

In a country depressed by the assassination and fed up with the stagflation resulting from independent India's worst foreign debt crisis, there is just one hope.

Bereft of a figurehead from the Nehru dynasty, Congress may be groping its way towards embracing allies in a new era of more stable coalition rule — if only to block the surge towards economic revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The BJP has what every other Indian party finds repulsive, a disciplined hierarchy and an aggressively Hindu identity.

Its campaign to claim the site of a mosque that it says marks the birthplace of a Hindu god has sparked riots across the nation between the overwhelmingly Hindu majority of India's 850 million people and the 120 million Muslim minority.

The third contender for power, the national Front of former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, has horrified the up-

per-caste Hindu elite by pledging to break their hold on the bureaucracy and give half of government jobs to lower castes.

At least Singh's party belongs to a mildly chaotic secular mainstream, where leaders, not cadres, win polls, and where religion-based deals for votes are made discreetly.

As for Singh's Communist allies in the Left Front, they have long been accepted as the left hand of Indian democracy.

Singh's followers accept they will fall far short of a majority in the 545-seat parliament.

His core party, Janata Dal, has split twice since he joined a long line of defectors from Congress and defeated Gandhi in the 1989 polls. Janata Dal's party machinery barely functions.

Singh is idolised by some of his followers as a pure-hearted messiah of the masses. Others find his principles irritating.

"V.P. Singh is not only above reproach, he's above approach," said one senior Janata Dal source, lamenting the leader's failure to tap big business for campaign funds.

"He has a mental block about money. He tells candidates, 'campaign by bicycle.' His financial integrity is unquestionable. He

values it more than the prime ministership."

The BJP surged from two seats in 1984 polls to 86 in 1989 and is certain to win more from the best-planned of campaigns.

Most analysts believe it did well in polling on May 20, the day before Gandhi's death, stripping votes from Congress with prom-

ises to restore Hindus' pride in their faith and nation.

Emphasising its discipline in a muted, impeccably organised campaign relaunch, the BJP has stolen Gandhi's election slogan of stability.

The BJP implicitly acknowledges that government is still at least one election away.

Without the Nehru dynasty to block career paths, those other parties might fall in with Sharma's scenario.

Even Akbar predicts no more than a bare majority, at best, for Congress. He characterises the voter reaction to Gandhi's killing as "a groundswell of sorrow, a de-

pression."

Features

JORDAN TIMES, SUNDAY, JUNE 5,

Keeper of order in the House of Commons becomes national figure

By Maureen Johnson
The Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A bespectacled figure in 18th-century court dress who intones "order, order," over a cacophony of cheers and jeers is an unlikely celebrity in modern Britain.

But the speaker of the House of Commons has become a star since television cameras entered parliament 18 months ago.

Bernard Weatherill has presided over the rumbustious Commons since 1983 with a skillful mixture of schoolmasterly reprimands, good humor, widely acclaimed impartiality and occasional acts of vengeance.

Hundreds of the 650 members vie to ask questions during the 15-minute prime minister's question time on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is the one bit of parliamentary theatre always carried live on television.

The speaker decides who is chosen — "called," in Commons parlance — from among the rank-and-file legislators who spring up from the green leather benches signaling for his favour.

"After all, if people mess

around, I don't have to call them," Weatherill said with a chuckle. "I don't see them."

Weatherill, 70, has been a Conservative Party legislator since 1964. Commons members elected him speaker in 1983.

In the grand apartments in the palace of Westminster that go with the \$95,500-a-year job, Weatherill conducted the interview in a palatial study, surrounded by portraits of speakers from past centuries.

His unchanging uniform adds to the air of timelessness and威严.

Weatherill is steeped in it. He sprinkles anecdotes with quotes from historians, from past speakers, from Winston Churchill, from a vicar who wrote to complain about members shouting at each other, from Americans who see the sessions on cable TV and who write in at the rate of 20 a week "nearly all admiring."

He presides at a difficult time.

The opposition Labour party has become increasingly frustrated by three successive general election defeats and is seldom able to block a Conservative prime minister.

"Here you saw effectively a

There was a risk of the opposition abandoning the Commons, particularly in 1987 when Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher won her third successive election.

Weatherill said.

"They said, 'what's the point of coming here? The government's going to win the vote every night.' I'd say to them, 'I know that... What matters here is winning the argument.'"

To prove that, Weatherill keeps a list of legislators he says have swayed the Commons with a single speech.

At least one made history. A devastating attack by former Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe precipitated the Conservative Party revolt that brought down Mrs. Thatcher in November.

Howe accused the prime minister he had served for more than a decade of undermining British interests in Europe.

"The time has come for others to consider their response to the tragic conflict of loyalty with which I have myself wrestled for perhaps too long," he told the packed and silent chamber.

"Here you saw effectively a

bloodless coup," Weatherill recalled. "It was a great parliamentary occasion none of us will ever forget."

In a system that makes a prime minister with a big majority in parliament nearly unstoppable, Weatherill has made sure the opposition is heard, ministers are quizzed and that Labour's shrinking left wing has its say.

Such impartiality has earned the disapproval of some in his own party — particularly under Mrs. Thatcher, who had supported another candidate for speaker in 1983.

"It took her own chief whip, John Wakeham, to remind her of constitutional practice, that the speaker is not... a slave, an echo, a suit of clothes," political commentator Edward Pearce wrote in his book on parliament, "Hummingbirds and Hyenas."

Has there been pressure to be a bit more partisan?

"There has been, of course," Weatherill said with a laugh.

"The government with a very big majority susceptible to the old adage that all power is delightful but absolute power is absolutely delightful."

From Mrs. Thatcher? "I've always got on extremely well with her... but I think she accepts I'm my own man and not prepared to be persuaded or browbeaten."

He believes his major achievement has been "to ensure that the democratic parliamentary system operated fairly, when the government had a very large majority."

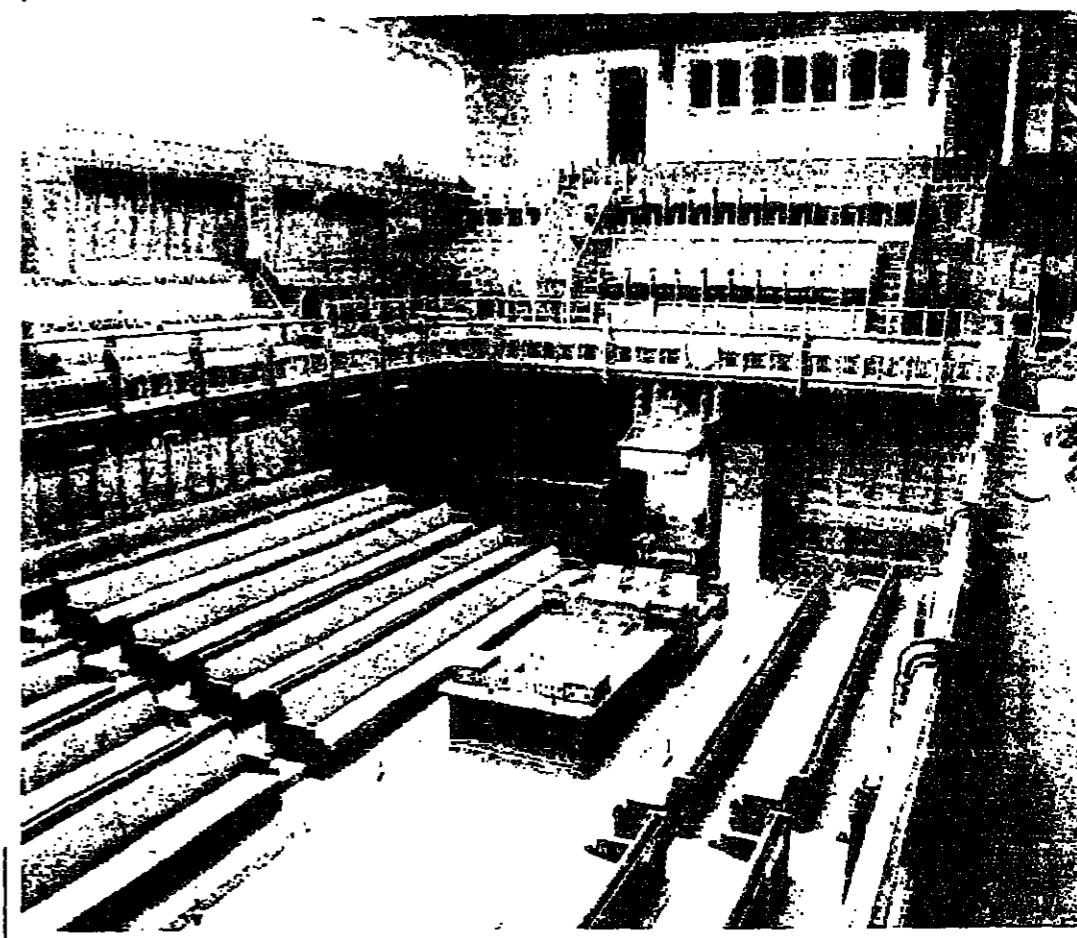
Weatherill is not bothered by the robust exchanges in the Commons, where government legislators sit on one side of the chamber and their opponents on the other.

There are groans, giggling and shouts of "rubbish." There also are concerted attempts to disrupt speeches, and lawmakers sometimes drown out the prime minister and cabinet members.

"Our parliamentary system is not and never has been consensus politics," Weatherill said. "It is specifically adversarial politics... I'm a sort of lightning conductor."

Weatherill will retire at the next election, later this year or next. What will he miss most?

"Do you really want to know? a driver."



The inside of the Commons chamber of deputies without the commons (file photo)

Charter in Jordan's ushers in new era life

(Continued from page 1)

ter of the National Charter present constitutional guidelines for interaction, analysts point to the second chapter defining Jordan as a state governed by law and political pluralism as the most revolutionary and important chapter in the 40-page document.

A state of law, the charter says, "is a democratic state which abides by the supremacy of the law and gains its legitimacy, power and strength from the will of free people."

"All the authorities within this state are committed to providing the legal, lawful and executive guarantees to protecting the human being, his dignity and basic freedoms which were founded by Islam and stressed by the international human rights and all international and United Nations charters and agreements in this regard," the definition continues.

The Jordanian state, the Charter says, "is a state of law in the modern concept of a democratic state and it is the state of all citizens regardless of their opinions."

"It gains its strength from the practical and public application of the principles of equality, justice and equal opportunity and allowing practical participation of the Jordanian people in decision-making on issues that affect their lives and provides all citizens with psychological comfort and faith in the future," it concludes.

A participant in the drafting of the National Charter maintains that "the main beneficiary (of the Charter) is the ordinary citizen." He explains that within a Jordanian state of law "no one party can rule nor one (type of) state" therefore protecting the citizen's right to be a political and uninfluenced by the drudge of political activity around him or her.

The Charter proposes that in the Jordanian state of law a

grievances court should be established to monitor the actions of those working in the executive authority and hands its reports to parliament and the cabinet. It is also proposed that a constitutional court be established to explain the articles of the constitution whenever there is a legal dispute that requires return to the constitution.

Licensing of political parties

Within the same chapter defining Jordan as a state of law, guidelines are providing for the establishment of political parties based on citizens' right to form political parties and become members of those parties.

There are three principal limits to the establishment of any political party: that its charter does not contradict the principles of the constitution, that the party or its members receive no funding or instructions from outside sources or

foreign country and that parties are not allowed to organise or recruit members of the armed forces and police or form military militias.

Informed sources told the Jordan Times that the new licensing law for political parties allows politicians to form political parties by depositing an application with a special committee made up of official and independent Jordanians but that they would not be required to wait for the decision of the committee before beginning political activities.

Jordanian-Palestinian relations

The Charter defines four principles to guide the Jordanian-Palestinian relations within the state of Jordan. It clearly allows for the coexistence of both a Jordanian national identity and a Palestinian one without any contradiction. It says that both identities are in direct contrast to the "Zionist colonial plan."

The Charter places limits on

government employees who are affiliated with one political party or another. It clearly stipulates that "parties cannot use government organisations and departments or public, charitable or religious institutions or utilise these places to further the cause of any party and these organisations cannot be brought into any political or party conflict."

Israeli settler kills Palestinian

(Continued from page 1)

hasten and start the peace process to reach a balanced and just peace... the peace process is continuing and alive and there is hope that it will start soon," Moussa said. "European participation in the peace process is important, necessary and positive."

And even then the committee's decision can be contested in court," the source said.

The Charter says that in no

way can the Jordanian-Palestinian relationship be misconstrued or utilised to affect the rights and duties embodied in Jordanian citizenship nor can it be used to weaken the Jordanian state internally.

It reflects on the Kingdom's decision to sever legal and administrative ties with the Israeli-occupied West Bank in the 1988 and the Palestine Liberation Organisation's decision to announce the formation of an independent Palestinian state in exile as measures that "stressed the special relationship between Jordanians and Palestinians and a foundation for placing this relationship within the proper framework."

In this chapter it is reiterated that national unity of the citizens of the country, regardless of their origin, is a necessary reality that has to be preserved and maintained.

Syria: Israel escalating tension

(Continued from page 1)

Israelis to the negotiating table.

They were participation of a U.N. observer at the opening meeting of a conference and a reconvening of the meeting after six months to hear reports on direct talks.

In Cairo, Egypt and Belgium Saturday said the Arab-Israeli conflict was poisoning the Middle East and warned of the consequences of failing to reach a quick peace settlement.

Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens and his Egyptian counterpart Amr Moussa spoke to reporters after they discussed current U.S.-led Middle East peace efforts, international issues and bilateral relations.

"The inability to find a solution (to the Middle East conflict) is poisoning the atmosphere in the region," Eyskens said. "If the peace process does not start before the end of 1991, it will lose its credibility."

He said Europe also can offer proposals during the negotiations.

"We share the same views with our Arab friends on the necessity of the participation of Europe in this conference," Eyskens said in the interview conducted in Brussels just before he flew to Cairo.

"It is necessary that Europe play an effective role, and we do not intend to be content with a side seat and an observer status," he added.

He said Europe also can offer proposals during the negotiations.

"Time is gold and we have to

Israeli settler kills Palestinian

(Continued from page 1)

case youths of exploiting their position as masked activists to rob innocent villagers.

Husseini was quoted as saying that he had "repeatedly warned about the dangers of changing the uprising so it looked like it focused on military action" and said that in order for the uprising to continue, "it needs support from the masses."

Court sentences Kuwaiti to death

(Continued from page 1)

things to happen to other people," he told three Western correspondents.

Defence lawyers have said confessions were extracted under torture since the collaboration trials began on May 19.

As Othman spoke in his office in the palace of justice, lawyers for 17 Iraqi, Jordanian and stateless Arabs accused of collaboration complained in courtroom that all confessions given to police by their clients were ex-

tracted by torture.

The lawyers asked the judge of the martial law court to dismiss the charges for lack of evidence.

"We thank the prosecution for presenting cases with no evidence," said lawyer Mohammad Al Anzi. The judge rejected the motion.

Western human rights group

have accused Kuwaiti police, soldiers and self-styled militias of carrying out a witch-hunt against

Palestinians because of Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)

support for Baghdad.

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Seles retains French Open title after victory over Sanchez

PARIS (Agencies) — Monica Seles defended her French Open title and her no. 1 ranking Saturday with a relentless, hard-edged 6-3, 6-4 victory in the final over Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

The match turned on a handful of points on which Seles' barrage of powerful groundstrokes eventually wore down Sanchez Vicario. Most of the time, the fifth seeded Spaniard chased down Seles' shots, producing frequent long and spectacular rallies.

The victory puts Seles halfway toward a Grand Slam sweep — she won the Australian Open in January. Her French Open championship last year was her first Grand Slam title.

The final game, with Seles serving at 5-4, was in itself epic struggle. Sanchez Vicario was unable to convert on four break points and survived three match points before hitting a backhand into the net to give Seles the victory.

"I can't believe it," the 17-year-old Yugoslav said. "It's incredible for me."

Seles, who was the top seed, earns a winner's check of \$378,500. Sanchez Vicario, whose 1989 French Open championship remains her only Grand Slam title, earns \$189,250.

Seles served to open the match and immediately was broken, making three consecutive unforced errors after leading 30-15. But Seles broke back in the fourth game to even the match at 2-2, aided by a double fault by Sanchez Vicario.

Then they split the next two games to make the score 3-3, but Seles took the next three games to win the first set in 34 minutes. Her constant pressure on Sanchez Vicario caused a number of short returns that Seles belted away for winners.

Sanchez Vicario fought off a break point in the opening game of the second set to go up, 1-0.

Seles dug her self out of 0-3 deficit in the next game, helped by a pair of Sanchez Vicario's

unforced errors and a pair of cross court winners. That evened it at 1-1.

Then Seles dropped three consecutive games to give Sanchez Vicario a 4-1 lead.

Suddenly, Sanchez Vicario's game faded. Seles won four games in a row of her own to go up 5-4 and serve for the match. A break point. Seles equalled it again by winning down a drop shot and punching a winner down in the final.

After Sanchez Vicario twice failed to convert break points, Seles gained her first match point. But a drop shot by Sanchez was good, as Seles hit the return out.

Seles had two more chances to end the match, but Sanchez Vicario evened it each time and had two more break points along the way.

Finally, Seles gained her fourth match point with a winner that was deep in the corner. Sanchez Vicario ended it when she put a backhand into the net.

Seles won last year against Steffi Graf. Sanchez Vicario routed Graf in the semifinals, 6-0, 6-2. Seles beat Argentine Gabriela Sabatini to make the final.

Americans reach men's finals

On the other hand, Andre Agassi's battle with himself may be the key to the first all-American men's singles final in 37 years at the French Open tennis championships Sunday.

No-one doubts the extraordinary talent of the fourth seed, who aims for his first Grand Slam title against big-hitting Jim Courier on centre court at Roland Garros.

But the 21-year-old Agassi has acquired an unfortunate reputation for flopping on the big occasion and a question mark hangs over his mental strength to withstand the pressure of starting favourite.

Agassi himself will need no reminding that he scarcely did

himself justice in last year's final when he was comprehensively beaten by the 30-year-old Andres Gomez of Ecuador.

He followed that up with a second debacle at the U.S. Open where, as at Roland Garros this year, he brilliantly beat Boris Becker in the semifinals only to disappoint once more by going down to young compatriot Pete Sampras in the final.

No less an authority than Beckenbauer believes he will win this time. "Think Andre is ready," he said after his defeat. "He's played better every day here. He's very hungry to do well."

"But Sunday is another day. You have to be able to control your nerves."

Agassi, who has demonstrated a greater maturity throughout the tournament, shows no sign of inner torment so far.

Unless Agassi loses his way in the labyrinth of his own complex mind, Courier may have to content himself with the role of Arthur Larsen, loser to Tony Trabert in the last All-American final in 1954.

But whatever the outcome, the United States will be able to celebrate a second victory in three years after a long, barren spell. Michael Chang's triumph two years ago was the first for the American men in Paris in 34 years.

The Tennis in the final may prove to be immaculate but the likes of Yves Saint Laurent and the Paris haute couture world are sure to give a little shudder at the sight of the two worst dressed men in tennis on centre court with great success.

"He has kind of opened my eyes about how to play tennis, how to use what I have got in a much more sensible way," Courier said. "He has really taught me to play tennis rather than just hit the ball."

Interestingly, both Higueras and Courier's semifinalist Michael Stich of Germany tip Agassi himself will need no

Agassi to win the final. But Higueras said he has always been impressed by how hard the 20-year-old Courier is prepared to work at his game. "I've never seen someone devote himself so entirely to his work," he said. "With a solid base like that, all things are possible."

After beating Stich, Courier exhibited an unpleasant brashness, reminiscent of Agassi not so long ago, which in itself cast doubts over his mental readiness for a Grand Slam summit he has never experienced before.

Even American journalists at his post-match news conference found his gung-ho pro-Americanism, with the underlying assumption that the world begins and ends in Florida, deeply offensive.

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"He has kind of opened my eyes about how to play tennis, how to use what I have got in a much more sensible way," Courier said. "He has really taught me to play tennis rather than just hit the ball."

But Sunday night, one of these two strangely attired young Americans will have Paris at his feet.

Bubka misses world record

ALCOBENDAS, Spain (AP) — Sergei Bubka of the Soviet Union failed Friday to get what would have been his 26th world pole vault record at an outdoor track and field meet hampered by sudden gusts of wind.

"And since we cannot change the size of the field, we have to enlarge the actual playing area by changing the offside rule," he said.

Bubka had to wait almost 10 minutes to try his first attempt to clear 5.66 metres, because the wind repeatedly knocked off the bar. After he skipped heights of 5.71 and 5.76 metres, he tried to clear the bar at 5.81.

He failed in his first two attempts. But, menaced by his compatriot Igor Potapovich, who cleared 5.76, he managed to jump 5.81 in his final attempt to win the event.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Chioccioli retains pink jersey

MONVISIO, Italy (AP) — Young Italian Nassimiliano Lelli broke away near the end and beat a trio of veterans to the finish line by three seconds Friday to win the 12th stage of the Tour of Italy, considered the toughest of the 21-day race. Lelli attacked with 100 metres remaining and reached the finish line on the snow-covered top of the Monviso peak in the western Alps ahead of Frenchman Jean Francois Bernard, overall leader Franco Chioccioli of Italy and Marino Lejarreta of Spain. Chioccioli, who earned a time bonus for finishing in the top three, retained the pink jersey of the overall leader for the eighth day and increased his advantage from one to 30 seconds. Defending champion Gianni Bugno, who closed to within a second of the lead two days ago, finished 1:55 behind Lelli. 1:52 behind Chioccioli, and dropped from second to fifth place.

Third fan dies on Isle of Man

LONDON (R) — A third motorcycling enthusiast died on the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy (TT) circuit while riding around the course which claimed the lives of four competitors, police said Friday. The 51-year-old Englishman was involved in a head-on crash with a car on the mountain course Thursday night at the end of the week-long event.

Navratalova sued

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — A former companion of tennis star Martina Navratilova filed suit seeking as much as \$10 million from the world's fourth-ranked player. Judy Nelson filed documents in a Fort Worth court this week alleging that Navratilova failed to comply with "non-marital cohabitation agreement" made after the two moved into a house together in 1986. Jerry Loftin, an attorney representing Ms. Nelson said: "We're asking for half of the assets accumulated during the partnership. We're talking \$5 to \$10 million. We're saying (Martina) doesn't want to abide by the agreement to turn over the property and money." The agreement contains "the mutual promise of each partner to act as companion and homemaker to the other," attorneys said. It also specifically states that neither woman would owe the other support, but would split what assets they had if their living arrangements changed.

Walker leads Milk Race

LEEDS, England (AP) — Jerry Cooman, a Belgian professional, sprinted to victory Friday in the 106-mile (171-kilometre) 11th stage of the Milk Race from Sheffield to Leeds. But Britain's Chris Walker held onto his overall lead with just one leg of the two-week, 1,100-mile (1,770-kilometre) marathon remaining. Cooman, 25, won by two lengths over Walker. The other top Belgian sprinter, Jan Bogaert, was third. Four cyclists — American Jonas Carney, Belgians Peter Naessens and Johan Devos, and Casper Van Der Meer of the Netherlands — led for 80 miles (128 kilometres) through some rugged Yorkshire Countryside. The group opened up a 10-minute lead at one point, but they were eventually caught by the rest of the pack seven miles (11 kilometres) from the finish. Walker has a 33-second advantage over Simeon Hempsall of England going into Saturday's final stage, an 82-mile (132-kilometre) leg from Manchester to Liverpool.

Jordan sparks in overtime victory

LOS ANGELES (R) — Michael Jordan averted defeat and paved the way to victory as the Chicago Bulls beat the Los Angeles Lakers 104-96 in overtime to win game three of the National Basketball Association finals Friday night. Jordan, the game's high scorer with 29 points, hit a 14-foot jump shot with 3.4 seconds left in the fourth quarter to level the game at 92-92 and force the overtime. In the five-minute overtime period the Chicago superstar guard then silenced the standing-room-only Los Angeles crowd hitting six points as the Bulls scored the last eight points of the period. The victory gives Chicago a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven series and once again gives the bulls the all-important home court advantage.

Cantona joins newly promoted club

MARSEILLE (AP) — Newly promoted Nimes have signed international striker Eric Cantona from French champions Marseille for a 10 million franc (\$1.7 million) fee, club sources said Friday. They said the agreement would keep Cantona at Nimes for three seasons. Nimes will be Cantona's fifth club in less than four years. He left Auxerre for Marseille in 1988 before joining Bordeaux and Montpellier and eventually returning to Marseille last year. The "enfant terrible" of French football, famous for his hot temper and skill on the ball, has been left out of the Marseille side by trainer Raymond Goethals for several months. Cantona declined an offer from Italian side Verona, club sources said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JUNE 9, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Be certain to be especially considerate of those around you this morning and do nothing at all that could disturb those with whom you have any sort of legal contact or pending agreement.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) This is certainly your day to think out a new course of action that can bring your personal desires to you and services or other studies aid.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can have one of your truly happy days so get busy early making the appointments with those who enjoy for mutual recreations.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Adopting some new standpoints at home that one of your family wishes can make all the difference between harmony and some harsh tensions.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Let those who you have been unable to see recently be the ones you visit after you have performed your literary studies and all's well.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Discuss with those who have made their abundance manifest what you will let you do to now with less fuss and ado to think about your relations of a peaceful nature.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You are able to have a new slant how to follow the ethics and the ideas that mean so much to you, but a new attitude of mind by you is essential.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Take some time out to consider what is expected of you by those who have a right to expect your best efforts and go along with their suggestions.

LIBRA: (September 22 to October 22) Listen to that hasty and impulsive.

THE BETTER HALF,

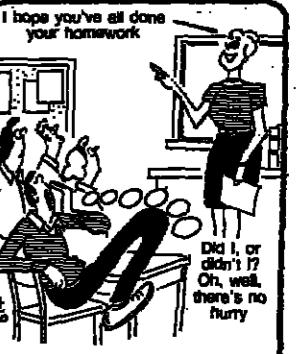
By Harris



"Good evening and welcome to Complaints-R-Us!"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRABLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

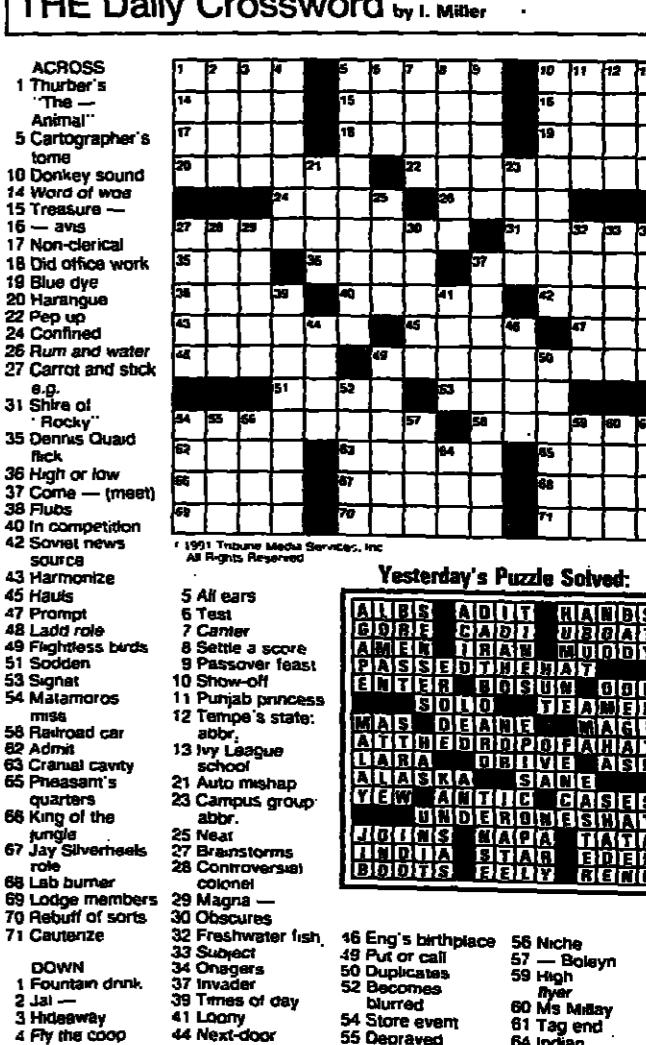
Print answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: LEAFY TOPAZ FILLET OPPOSE

Answer: The farmer became successful in the laundry business, because he already knew how to make a living -- OFF THE SOIL

THE Daily Crossword



مكذا من الأصل

Financial Jordan Times
Markets In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank



U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Mar. 6 1991	Alex. Port. Close Mar. 7 & 1991
Sterling Pound	1.6575	1.6710
Deutsche Mark	1.7530	1.7720
Swiss Franc	1.5035	1.5182
French Franc	5.9355	6.0000
Japanese Yen	139.25	140.47
European Currency Unit	1.1761	1.1822

USD Pkr STG

European Opening - 8:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 8-6-1991

Currency	1 MTHS	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	6.00	6.12	6.25	6.57
Sterling Pound	11.50	11.72	11.90	10.81
Deutsche Mark	8.57	8.35	8.25	9.35
Swiss Franc	6.12	6.25	7.43	7.51
French Franc	9.56	9.43	9.43	9.43
Japanese Yen	7.81	8.05	7.55	7.37
European Currency Unit	10.12	9.95	9.51	9.57

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding 1,000,000 and equivalent

Precious Metals Date: 5-6-1991

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	360.50	6.70	Silver	4.46	0.10

21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 8-6-1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.654	.666
Sterling Pound	1.1715	1.1475
Deutsche Mark	.5856	.5875
Swiss Franc	.4500	.4523
French Franc	.1138	.1144
Japanese Yen	.4869	.4893
Dutch Guilder	.3423	.3440
Swedish Krona	.1076	.1091
Italian Lira	.0520	.0533
Belgian Franc	.01674	.01684

*Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 8-6-1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7560	1.8200
Lebanese Lira	.074	.076
Saudi Riyal	.1630	.1530
Kuwaiti Dinar	-	-
Qatari Riyal	.1846	.1855
Egyptian Pound	.1900	.2050
Omani Riyal	1.7470	1.7660
UAE Dirham	.1846	.1855
Greek Drachma	.3450	.3650
Cypriot Pound	1.4000	1.4200

Per 100

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	29/5/1991 Close	5/6/1991 Close
All-Share	113.19	112.16
Banking Sector	110.27	105.95
Insurance Sector	112.59	112.92
Industry Sector	116.03	114.91
Services Sector	126.37	128.24

December 31, 1988 - 100

Big U.S. city files for bankruptcy

BRIDGEPORT, Connecticut (R) — Bridgeport, a former industrial boom town that has seen its prosperity wane in the face of the U.S. recession and a financial crisis, has taken the drastic step of filing for bankruptcy.

Connecticut's biggest city, 90 kilometers northeast of New York and home to 140,000 people, entered bankruptcy court late Thursday, becoming the largest U.S. city ever to file for bankruptcy.

"Their decision to file for bankruptcy independent of the state has no legal authority, regardless of their financial situation," the spokesman said.

Bridgeport is a financial sore spot in surrounding Fairfield County, lush countryside studded with large estates, horse farms and rolling hills. Real estate moguls Harry and Leona Helmsley, actors Paul Newman and Jason Robards Jr. and actress Jessica Tandy live in Fairfield County.

Bridgeport was home to impresario P.T. Barnum and for many years was the winter home of his famous circus.

Like many cities in the U.S.

northeast, the region hardest hit by the 11-month-old recession, Bridgeport has seen its tax revenues squeezed and spending strained.

Connecticut State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal Friday declared the filing illegal and a spokesman said he will ask the bankruptcy court to rescind the City's move.

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tion," the spokesman said.

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"If at all this sale is perceived

as being a real issue, it is because it is an important step towards self-help and therefore the satisfaction and confidence of others will go up," Mr. Sinha said.

"It's not the family jewels we're trying to sell," he told a news conference before returning home to rest.

Many ordinary Indians, however, see the deal as just that.

"It hurts me to know that our government has sold the national treasure," said housemaid Ila Wat. "I tell you sir, I am convinced there are dark days ahead for our country."

"The government has no sense of what it is doing," said taxi driver Ram Singh. "Even as small children we were taught to value gold because it is the one thing that we need for all our rituals from the time of our birth to our death."

"There has been a sympathetic response from newspaper editorialists. It would be an exceedingly odd family that acquired its silver from smugglers and claimed this was sacred," said the Times of India.

But the three Major parties

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Finland pegs currency to ECU

HELSINKI (AP) — Finland tied the value of its currency to the European Currency Unit (ECU) Friday, reflecting the government's decision to link the country more closely to its Western neighbours.

President Mauno Koivisto and parliament approved a bill to measure the mark against European Community (ECU) currencies instead of a basket of currencies including Japan, the United States and other Finnish trading partners.

Government and central bank officials ruled out a devaluation of the mark, although some industrialists had said overvaluation of the currency was contributing to Finland's economic troubles.

The rise in the civilian unemployment rate was a sharp 0.3 percentage points higher than April's rate of 6.6 per cent, the Labour Department said.

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said the unemployment figures were "unfortunate" but he pointed to other economic indicators, such as retail sales, that were rebounding. "We still believe the recession is ending and we're on the road to recovery," he said.

Friday's report also provided good news about the hiring practices of U.S. businesses. Non-farm payrolls grew by 59,000 in May, the first such job growth in nearly a year.

Mr. Janet Norwood, commissioner of the Bureau of Labour Statistics, noted that the two numbers — more unemployed Americans at the same time companies were adding jobs — seem to contradict each other.

Mrs. Norwood said the two statistics, which are derived from different surveys, should be looked at over the past two months for a more consistent picture. Then, she said, they show that the "labour market situation is stabilising."

"While the first three months of the year saw massive job losses and a rapid rise in unemployment, the data for April and May indicate a leveling off in the labour market," Mrs. Norwood said.

Joblessness has been climbing

U.S. unemployment rises to 6.9 per cent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. unemployment rate jumped to 6.9 per cent in May as another 370,000 Americans were added to jobless rolls, the government reported Friday.

The rise in the civilian unemployment rate was a sharp 0.3 percentage points higher than April's rate of 6.6 per cent, the Labour Department said.

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Joblessness has been climbing

High prices hit Iraqi civil servants hardest

BAGHDAD (R) — In post-Gulf war Iraq, a country cut off from the rest of the world by U.N. sanctions, civil servants and public sector workers are bearing the brunt of inflation.

With prices between three and 70 times higher than a year ago, depending on the commodity, Iraqis on fixed incomes are counting their dinars more carefully than they have in decades.

The recovery theory was backed up by Friday's news about the payroll hirings, analysts said. Still, that might not translate immediately into a big improvement in the jobless rate itself, economists said.

"For the average person on main street, it's still going to be difficult to see the good new for a while... the unemployment rate is usually the last dog to die, the last piece of bad news to go away," they added.

With the 370,000 Americans who joined the ranks of the unemployed in May, the jobless now number 8.6 million — 1.7 million higher than last July, the report said.

The figures for newly unemployed and how many new jobs were added or lost in a month can differ because one comes from a survey of households and the other from a survey of business establishments. In addition, the total number of the jobless includes both people who lost their jobs and those returning to the labour market or those new to the work force.

The 59,000-job for May buoyed analysts because it's such a stark contrast to the steep job losses in recent months,

World outside the oil emirates of the Gulf, have not risen since late 1989. They had already fallen sharply in real terms during the 1980-83 Iran-Iraq war.

"I've lost control of the household budget," said Mrs. Mahrousa Idris. "No sooner do I buy some tea than the sugar runs out. When I bought the sugar, then I run out of rice. It's a vicious circle."

Government employees complain that their guaranteed rations, which are generous by the standards of emergency relief, do not last the

Soviet prime minister accuses West of waging economic war

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov has accused Western banks of waging economic war against the Soviet Union and warned that foreigners were planning to buy up the country's natural resources.

Pavlov, in a meeting Wednesday with Moscow region business and farming managers, said hundreds of billions of rubles were being spent to rob the country of its resources. His comments were published Friday in the newspaper *Leninskoye Znamya*.

Pavlov also accused Western banks of blocking credits to Soviet businesses.

The prime minister's accusations came as President Mikhail Gorbachev appeals to the West for economic aid. He intends to plead his case at the economic summit of industrialised nations in London next month.

Pavlov said that Soviet enterprises dealing with the West think that "all they have to do is appeal for money and 'they will get everything for free.'

In reality, he said, all countries had quotas on credits and the information was stored in a computer in Basel, Switzerland.

Soviet firms were not in line for credits, he said.

"When the quota is exhausted, a red light appears. Not a single bank gives money," he said. "Can we call it a financial war. Yes, we probably can."

Repeating allegations he made in February, Pavlov said foreign banks were amassing hundreds of billions of rubles to buy up Soviet businesses and resources as the country moves to a market economy.

According to foreign financial law, these deals are legitimate and are not subject to criminal prosecution," Pavlov said. "But we have our own laws. We are working on the necessary measures to prevent the buying up of national resources."

In February, Pavlov accused Western banks of acquiring billions of rubles that they planned to dump into the Soviet economy in deals that would set off hyperinflation and allow the banks to buy up Soviet businesses cheaply as the country begins to privatise.

Pavlov's comments in February were widely criticised as political propaganda.

Some Western economists consider Pavlov, the former finance minister, as responsible for the current inflationary spiral. He supervised the printing of billions of excess rubles to cover an enormous budget deficit.

Last December, the state bank warned foreign banks and financial institutions not to accept illegal payments in rubles from Soviet banks and businesses. The bank said Soviet enterprises had been trying to make tens of billions of rubles worth of payments to foreign companies claiming they had government backing.

Soviet law forbids individuals and businesses from exporting large amounts of rubles without special permission.

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of Defence Dick Cheney said Friday it was in the West's interest to support Soviet reform but that unconditional assistance as proposed by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was out of the question.

Cheney said a wide variety of aid might be made available to the Soviet Union such as technical assistance, access to markets

and loan guarantees, but any help must be tied to Soviet democratisation and demilitarisation.

"If we can ... be way of private support ... promote democracy inside the Soviet Union and promote the demilitarisation of Soviet society we ought to consider it," Cheney told a World Affairs Council of Boston audience.

"I think it is our interest to have reforms succeed inside the Soviet Union," he said. "But I take exception to what Gorbachev said ... in Oslo, the notion that there should be no conditions to the package."

Gorbachev, accepting the Nobel Peace Prize he was awarded in 1990, made it plain in his acceptance speech in Oslo Wednesday that he would accept no conditions set by outsiders to help buoy his economy.

"Applying conventional wisdom to perestroika is unproductive," he said. "It is futile and dangerous to set conditions to say: 'We'll understand and believe you as soon as you, the Soviet Union, come completely to resemble us, the West.'

China will not rule out Taiwan takeover

PEKING (R) — Peking renewed Saturday its threat to take Taiwan by military force, saying the unification of the island with China was an important goal of the coming decade.

"We stress the use of peaceful methods to reunify the country. However, we will not promise to abandon the military option," the People's Daily quoted a leading official of the Taiwan Affairs Office in Peking as saying.

"This is by no means a threat to the Taiwan people but is aimed at thwarting foreign interference in China's reunification process and thwarting schemes to realise inde-

pendence for Taiwan," the official said.

"Taiwan independence violates the welfare of the people and goes against the tide of history. It cannot succeed," he said.

Taiwan's Nationalist leaders, driven to the island by Communists' victory on the mainland in 1949, say they hope that China can be reunited one day under democracy.

Taipei is promoting reforms aimed at improving relations with Peking, voicing hopes that China will respond positively and renounce the use of force against the island.

But Peking's official press has

kept up a stream of criticism of Taiwan this week, accusing the Nationalists of stalling on unification and providing opportunities for proponents of Taiwan independence.

"Stop splitting hairs and get down to doing something concrete about reunifying China," Yu Shutong, head of the China Law Society, said in an article carried by the New China News Agency Wednesday.

The reunification of the island is reported to be one of the final goals of China's 86-year-old senior leader, Deng Xiaoping, official sources have said.

Thousands of S. Koreans clash with riot police

SEOUL (R) — South Korean riot police fought hit-and-run battles Saturday with thousands of student radicals and labour activists demonstrating against a government crackdown on political foes.

"Let's oust the murderous regime of (President) Roh Tae Woo," about 3,000 demonstrators chanted as they hurled thousands of flaming petrol bombs and stones at police in the heart of Seoul.

Riot police fired repeated volleys of tear gas from armoured vans and baton-charged the protesters who fled down alleyways.

Elsewhere in the capital, about

Italian vote could hit political system

ROME (R) — Italians vote Sunday in an electoral reform referendum that could hit the mafia and serve as a protest against the stagnant political system.

They are to decide the fate of an ambitious plan devised to stamp out electoral fraud and weaken the hand of organised crime in politics by simplifying the convoluted way Italians vote.

Its supporters say thousands may turn out to vote Sunday and Monday because they are tired of a political system marked by squabbling and fractious short-lived coalitions unable to take tough decisions.

"If you've lost all hope of reforming the system, then go to the beach Sunday," said Mario Segni, the Sardinian law professor and architect of the plan.

But opponents say it will have no impact on electoral fraud and merely reduce people's choice at election time.

Socialist leader Bettino Craxi described it as "unconstitutional, unjust and anti-social."

"We believe it is quite right that people should boycott this useless and irrelevant referendum," Craxi's deputy, Giulio Di Donato, said Friday.

The plan can be approved or rejected — or the whole costly exercise could fail completely if less than half the 48 million registered voters turn out.

Segni, a member of parliament for the dominant Christian Democrats, proposes changing voting procedures by cutting the number of candidates voters can choose in an election to one from four. This would eliminate a complex trade in preferences.

In a move directly tilted at the mafia, it also proposes that voters write the surname of their chosen candidate on their ballot paper rather than — as at present — his allotted number.

Many voters in the southern strongholds of organised crime say mafia gangs are able to see their completed ballot slips, making them vulnerable to intimidation.

"She is being totally disloyal to members of the cabinet including John Major. It is time for her to shut up," said one Conservative parliamentarian on the party's left wing.

A new Thatcher broadside hit Major Friday when she made a staunch defence of her pet project, a highly unpopular poll tax to finance local government spending. Major scrapped it.

She told a Japanese magazine that the essence of his replacement plan for the tax — shifting it from a charge on residents to central taxation — risked putting the country on the road to ruin.

Major's fortunes sag under pressure of U.K. recession

LONDON (R) — John Major, who rose from the shadows to replace Margaret Thatcher as British prime minister, is watching his popularity slide after just six months in office.

A key opinion poll Friday showed that Major and his Conservative Party had fallen sharply against the opposition Labour Party and its effusive Welsh leader Neil Kinnock.

A sharp recession, rumblings of discontent from Thatcher and an apparent public readiness for a change of government after 12 years of Conservative rule are working against Major, who must call an election within the next 13 months.

"The economy is in a mess. The government is in a mess. The main asset we have got is John Major," one outspoken Thatcherite Conservative politician said.

But the value of that asset may be waning and Major and his cabinet have appeared to be forced into a series of knee-jerk reactions and hasty and this policy announcements.

Leading Conservative David Howell said in a magazine article this week that Major's cabinet was failing to show vision.

"Under pressure, Conservative ministers seem to lack experience ..." he said, arguing that the cabinet needed old hands to counter the professionalism of Labour's front bench.

On average, Kinnock and his team of spokesmen have been in their jobs for more than three years against an average of eight months for 48-year-old Major and his cabinet.

"The British prime minister needs a good trumpet in his band. He has to get off the defensive and sound some really good clear notes of advance," said Howell, who chairs parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee.

1,000 radicals raced back and forth across a main road outside the railway station, attacking riot police with wooden clubs and iron bars. There were no immediate reports of serious injuries.

In the southwestern city of Kwangju, a pitched battle erupted after about 2,000 demonstrators tried to push through thousands of police guarding the streets near the provincial government building, Yonhap News Agency said.

About 3,000 protesters took to the streets in Pusan, the south east city which is the country's second largest, state radio said.

Elsewhere in the capital, about

De Klerk in Kenya, seeks economic foothold in Africa

NAIROBI (R) — President F.W. De Klerk Saturday began the first visit to Kenya by a South African government leader since 1948, saying he would seek an economic foothold in East Africa.

Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi gave De Klerk a red-carpet welcome on his arrival in Nairobi in recognition of his reforms of apartheid during his 22 months in power and his promise to end

white rule.

De Klerk made no formal statement about his trip. But he told reporters on his plane he would be looking for an economic foothold in East Africa.

"We want to regain what we regard as our rightful place in the international community. This is just an exploratory trip, but sometimes things can happen very quickly," he said.

Families flee as Philippine volcano eruption predicted

MANILA (Agencies) — Over 5,000 people were evacuated Saturday as huge steam clouds billowed from a Philippine volcano which experts said was ready to erupt.

Families fled to school buildings as Mount Pinatubo, which has been dormant for 600 years, showed signs that it would spew fiery ash and rocks on villages northwest of Manila.

"An aerial survey showed some dome-building or huge rocks at the peak being pushed up by magma," Delfin Garcia, of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, said in a radio interview.

"This increases the chances of an eruption. It won't be long before (the volcano) erupts," he added.

Huge steam columns billowed 5,000 metres (16,000 feet) above Pinatubo's vents and ash was falling, an institute report said.

The Philippine National Red Cross said 5,400 people from two provinces had been moved from their homes and were living in public school buildings.

Chief volcanologist Raymundo Punongbayan warned Friday that when a volcano had been dormant for a long time an eruption would hit with explosive force.

"It could spew clouds of ash, rocks, and gas with heat of between 600 and 1,000 degrees Celsius (1,100 and 1,800 Fahrenheit), and roll down at a speed of 15 to 100 kilometres per hour (10 to 60 mph)," he said.

"This is the type of hazard similar to the killer eruption of the Unzen Volcano of Japan," he said.

Unzen, dormant for almost 200 years, came to life last November and then exploded Monday, killing at least 38 people according to an army count.

Mount Pinatubo showered nearby villages with dust and mud in a hydrothermal explosion in April, but no one was hurt.

An eruption could affect operations of the nearby U.S. Clark Air Base, which is 20 kilometres to the east.

Meanwhile, after a day of relative quiet, Mount Unzen in southern Japan burst to life again Saturday, spewing forth new volcanic flows and filling the skies with a snowstorm of powdery grey ash.

Much of the area hit by Saturday's debris had already been evacuated.

Two dark grey plumes billowed out from the volcano as a large-scale eruption Saturday afternoon sent more superhot debris and gas down the 1,357-metre-tall mountain's east slope.

The eruption, and a flurry of smaller-scale volcanic activity throughout the day, led officials to issue a strong warning for local residents to remain cautious.

Earlier in the day, officials widened the area under evacuation order to include Shimabara's neighbouring town of Fukae and some other small districts. The total number of people affected thus increased by about 1,300 to 8,500, many of them forced to live in local school gymnasiums.

Shimabara, a city of 50,000 lies at the foot of the mountain.

Evening news broadcasts showed residents packing up and moving out of their homes, some taking their livestock with them.

Officials said they had no idea when the evacuees would be able to go home.

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